

sacrifice, the laying down of his life for others. I am reminded of the Apostle Paul's words in the Epistle to the Philippians: 'Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus . . . ' John Gibson's life and final sacrifice personified this ethic, and we are all humbly and eternally indebted to him."

IN MEMORY OF THE HONORABLE
CARL S. SMITH OF HOUSTON,
TEXAS

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of a legend in both Houston and Texas politics, my constituent, the Honorable Carl S. Smith, who died Tuesday afternoon, at the age of 89.

Carl S. Smith dedicated his life to public service. He was first appointed as Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector in 1947. He was elected in 1948 and re-elected an unprecedented 12 times, serving a total of 51 years. In fact, Carl was so dedicated to public service that he never considered his job "work." That's not just an assertion—Carl never retired. Throughout all these years, Carl helped Harris County residents meet their common obligations to one another and to their government by making it more convenient for citizens to pay taxes and register to vote. He was also responsible for car registration, alcohol license fees, and a host of state levies.

Carl lived a long and good life. He was born just as the combustible engine was first being applied in cars. He ended his life riding the crest of the information age. Not only can Carl's life chart the course of American history, his acts of courage foreshadow great changes in American history. For example, in 1952, Carl was the first county official to promote an African-American employee to an important government position, a deputy clerkship. This was a small but significant act in the early days of the Civil Rights movement. Additionally, Carl was an advocate for the elderly. He wrote the statewide property tax exemption for senior citizens that was later adopted as a constitutional amendment. Finally, Carl was able to adapt to the times. In the past few years, Carl received accolades for automating and computerizing his office's operations.

Carl's dedication to public service is an example to all Americans of what government is capable of accomplishing. Carl was first elected to office just two years after our victory in World War II, when it was thought that we could accomplish anything. He held on to that belief even in this cynical era where government is among the least trusted of public and private institutions. He is a model to all Americans involved in public service and especially elderly Americans. A few years ago, Carl joked that while his body had aged, his doctor said he had the "mind of a 20-year-old."

While he was tax assessor at the time of my birth and I remember learning his name at an early age, I first came to know Carl when I be-

came the Chairman of the Harris County Democratic Party in 1990. Ever since then, whenever I was in the Harris County Administration Building, I would stop to say hello. Whether I was there on business or to register a car, Carl would always call me in to sit down and talk politics in his office, which consisted of maps, floor to ceiling boxes, and records. Just a few years ago, I was picking up new license plates, and Carl summoned me to another part of the office where he was helping staff and conducting a seminar. In his 51 years at the helm, it is fair to say that Carl S. Smith probably did every job there was to do in the Tax Assessor-Collectors' Office he ran.

Carl S. Smith was a good and great man. He was my constituent, but more importantly, he was my friend and one whose counsel I often sought. As much as Harris County loved and respected Carl, his family has suffered an even greater loss.

I ask unanimous consent to insert in the RECORD at this point an article and obituary which appeared in the Houston Chronicle on July 29, 1998.

[From the Houston Chronicle, July 29, 1998]

CARL SMITH, TAX CHIEF FOR 51 YEARS, DIES

(By Bob Tutt)

Carl S. Smith, who served 51 years as Harris County's tax assessor and collector and was the senior elected official here, died Tuesday afternoon. He was 89.

His death came at St. Luke's Hospital where he had been confined just over two weeks for treatment of heart problems and other complications.

The Harris County Commissioners Court appointed him to the tax assessor's office in 1947 upon the death of the incumbent, Jim Glass. The next year Smith won election to the post, then was re-elected 12 times. If he had completed the last two years of his term, he would have been 91.

County Judge Robert Eckels announced Smith's death during Tuesday's session of Commissioners Court, prompting gasps from the audience.

"The county has lost someone who's been an institution here," Eckels said. "He was a great leader . . . and someone who cared a great deal for the people of this country."

Eckels then led the court in a moment of silence in Smith's memory.

Commissioner Jim Fonteno, a 24-year veteran of the court, said Smith made him look like the new kid on the block.

"He's been a good one," Fonteno said. "He's been dedicated. He'd get with you too. If you said something he didn't like, he'd take you to task on it."

District Clerk Charles Bacarisse joined other department heads in praising Smith, calling him an "icon" of county government. "He clearly was a man of honor and integrity and ran his office in an honorable fashion," Bacarisse said.

Jack Loftis, Chronicle executive vice president and editor, reflected, "To say that Carl Smith was the consummate public official would not be giving him proper credit for the 51 years of honest and gracious service he provided to the citizens of Harris County. He was an extraordinary man in every way."

Eckels added, "I remember that he would be down here many times at midnight helping people to file their taxes by the deadline so they wouldn't have to pay a penalty."

The court appointed Loretta Wimp, Smith's chief clerk, as temporary tax assessor-collector. Later it will appoint an acting assessor-collector to serve until a replacement is elected in November.

Under state law a successor to fill out Smith's term will be selected in an election

held as part of the Nov. 3 general election. Had Smith died after Aug. 30, Commissioners Court would have named his successor.

Smith had considered retiring in 1996. He said he decided against it because his doctor had pronounced him very fit and he wanted to oversee installation of a new computer system to process motor vehicle titles and licenses. David Minberg, the Democratic County Chairman, also had urged him to run again.

At the time, Smith joined, "My doctor said I have the mind of a 20-year-old, but that's stretching a bit."

He noted at the time that his years of service in the county's employ would make him eligible for a pension greater than his \$93,000 salary.

In winning re-election in 1996 Smith captured almost 60 percent of the vote. He and state District Judge Katie Kennedy turned out to be the only Democrats to win county-wide elections that year.

Reflecting on his tenure in office, Smith said he took special pride in establishing tax office substations around the county to dispense automobile and voter registrations and provide other services.

That, he pointed out, enabled citizens to avoid long lines at county offices downtown.

Smith also said he was proud of efforts he and the late state Sen. Criss Cole made in support of state legislation allowing homestead exemptions to reduce property taxes for senior citizens.

Smith boasted that in keeping with changing times he had computerized and upgraded his office's operations.

His responsibilities also included directing registration of voters and maintaining voter registration rolls.

A native of Lindale in Smith County in northeast Texas, Smith spent most of his life in Houston. A graduate of Reagan High School, he got a law degree from the Houston Law School in 1934, in addition to taking courses at the University of Houston.

Smith had served as president of the Tax Assessor-Collectors Association of Texas as well as the International Association of Assessing Officers.

His wife of 59 years, Dorothy, died in 1991. They were parents of two daughters, Nancy Stewart and Pam Robinson, both of Houston.

Visitation will be from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday at the Geo. H. Lewis & Sons Funeral Home, 1010 Bering Dr. Services will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday at Bethany Christian Church, 3223 Westheimer.

CARL S. SMITH

HARRIS COUNTY WILL MISS ITS LONG-TIME
PUBLIC SERVANT

The secret of Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector Carl Smith's five decades in office has to be that he changed with the times yet managed to remain an old-fashion public servant. His reputation is that of an effective manager and an admirable man.

In his last terms in office, Smith became used to hearing about himself as "an institution" and "the dean" of Harris County government. He made no bones about his advancing years, sometimes joking that he could tune out nonsense by turning down the volume on his hearing aids. Smith was appointed to head the tax office after the death of the incumbent, Jim Glass, in 1947, and was fond of noting that he was elected in 1948, the same year Harry Truman was elected president.

"Youth and inexperience are no match for age and determination," Smith would say, crediting the comment to former President George Bush.

Well liked and respected at Commissioners Court, Smith was revered by many of his employees, from whom he insisted on unwavering courtesy to the public. A number of Smith's employees have been with him for decades. It was frequently said that when Smith finally left office, the average age of tax office employees likely would decline significantly.

Smith, a native of Lindale, Texas, took a law degree from Houston Law School before a great many of his Harris County constituency were born. Talk around the county was that Smith, one of the Harris County's last remaining Democrats elected countywide and serving his 12th term, was clinging to the office to keep it out of Republican hands. But there is no denying he managed an efficient shop.

Through the years, Smith fought off usurpers to his domain of tax collection and tax bill distribution, voter registration, motor vehicle registration, alcohol license fees and other state levies. Smith fended off a proposal by powerful former Mayor Bob Lanier to give a portion of his office's tax collection function to a law firm. And in his most recent re-election, Smith put down a challenger's campaign to shutter the tax office, pass voter registration duties to the county clerk and privatize tax collection.

Smith, in 1952, was the first county official to promote a black employee to an important government position, a deputy clerkship. And he wrote the statewide property tax exemption for citizens over 65 that was later adopted as a constitutional amendment.

Smith's wife of 59 years, Dorothy DeArman Smith, died in 1991. They were parents of two daughters, Nancy Stewart and Pam Robinson, both of Houston.

His mind clear, his wit sharp and his sense of humor intact, Smith's heart failed him in the end. He died at 89 at St. Luke's Hospital, where he was being treated for heart problems. Carl Smith will be long missed and remembered always.

INTRODUCTION OF THE STAND DOWN AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1998

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 30, 1998

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Stand Down Authorization Act of 1998. This important legislation will build up and expand the VA's role in providing outreach assistance to homeless veterans.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), more than 275,000 veterans are without homes every night and twice as many may be homeless during the course of the year. Based on this statistic, one out of every three individuals who is sleeping in a doorway, alley or box in our cities and rural communities has put on a uniform and served our country. Unfortunately, these numbers are only expected to increase as the military downsizes.

In times of war, exhausted combat units requiring time to rest and recover were removed from the battlefield to a place of safety. This procedure was known as "Stand Down." Today, Stand Downs which help veterans are held across our nation. Stand Downs are grassroots, community-based intervention programs designed to help the estimated 275,000 veterans without homes in our country. To-

day's battlefield is too often life on the streets for our nation's veterans.

The Stand Down Authorization Act of 1998 will direct the VA to create a pilot program that would establish Stand Down programs in every state. Currently, only 100 Stand Down events take place in a handful of states annually. In addition, my legislation would also authorize the VA to distribute excess supplies and equipment to Stand Downs across the nation.

The first such special Stand Down, held in 1988, was the creation of several Vietnam veterans. The goal of the event was to provide one to three days of hope designed to serve and empower homeless veterans. Since, the, Stand Downs have provided a means for thousands of homeless or near-homeless veterans to obtain a broad range of necessities and services including food, clothing, medical care, legal assistance, mental health assessment, job counseling and housing referrals. Most importantly, Stand Downs provide a gathering that offers companionship, camaraderie and mutual support.

Thousands of volunteers and organizations over the past decade have done an outstanding job donating their time, expertise an energy to address the unique needs of homeless or near-homeless veterans and their families. Currently, the VA coordinates with local veteran service organizations, the National Guard and Reserve Units, homeless shelter programs, health care providers and other members of the community in organizing the Stand Down events annually. However, much more action is needed to address the persistent and growing number of homeless veterans who have fought honorably to preserve our freedom and now face personal crisis in their lives.

Veterans in past service unconditionally stood up for America. Now we must speak up and stand up for veterans today. I urge all members to join with me in providing outreach assistance to veterans without homes by co-sponsoring the Stand Down Authorization Act of 1998.

CLEVELAND HOPKINS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 30, 1998

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a very important issue in my district, Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.

Just yesterday, the United States House of Representatives passed the Transportation Appropriations bill, an important piece of legislation for this country. The Honorable Chairman of the Transportation Appropriations Committee, Mr. WOLF, has crafted a bipartisan piece of legislation that will serve this country's transportation needs for the coming fiscal year.

Accompanying this bill is the House Committee Report (105-648). I would like to clarify something in the RECORD that is contained in this report as it relates to Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.

Cleveland Hopkins is vitally important to Northeast Ohio. It not only connects Northeast Ohio with the rest of the world, it provides jobs

and economic opportunity for the people who live there. Cleveland Hopkins is also within the city limits, and is surrounded by residential communities that are being asked to adjust to the growing demands being placed on the airport.

Because the airport is very close to reaching overcapacity, the city of Cleveland has embarked upon a plan to expand the capacity of the airport and to improve it so that it may meet the needs of the 21st century. Improving the airport and expanding its capacity in the least intrusive manner to surrounding communities is something that I wholeheartedly support.

However, there is language in the Transportation Appropriations Committee Report that needs to be clarified. The language states on page 78, "The Committee urges the FAA administrator to give priority consideration to a request for discretionary funding for site and engineering studies for the proposed runway expansion at the Cleveland Hopkins International Airport."

The case to expand a specific runway has not yet been made, and singling out this one aspect of the proposed expansion could be misleading. Expanding the capacity of the airport to handle increased air traffic would not necessarily be advanced by merely lengthening one runway.

It is my understanding that it was not the intention of the Committee to determine particular airport improvements. The Committee wishes to urge the FAA to give priority to necessary studies of airport improvements at Cleveland Hopkins. Such studies might include a wide range of possible projects. All legitimate proposals for expanding the airport deserve equal consideration, as well as scrutiny by the FAA, air traffic controllers, local officials from the affected communities, residents, and my Congressional office.

To this end, I intend to work with the House-Senate Transportation Appropriation Conference Committee to clarify that the House Committee did not mean to specify a runway expansion, but to instruct the FAA to make Cleveland Hopkins airport improvements generally a priority for engineering and site studies.

Thank you Mr. Speaker for giving me this opportunity to clarify the Committee's intention for the RECORD.

HONORING ADMIRAL ROBERT E. KRAHEK

HON. BOB CLEMENT

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 30, 1998

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Admiral Robert E. Kramek, Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, for his devoted service to the U.S. Coast Guard and his commitment to our country.

Admiral Kramek began his long road to become the 20th Commandant of the United States Coast Guard when he graduated with honors from the USCG Academy with a B.S. in Engineering in 1961. He attended post